

MS-56092  
12014 P  
14250,9  
5-6531  
1184

# REPLY

OF

## JOSEPH SMITH,

TO THE

### LETTER OF J. A. B——.

OF

A———N HOUSE, NEW YORK.

---

LIVERPOOL:  
PUBLISHED BY R. HEDLOCK AND T. WARD,  
36, CHAPEL STREET.  
*Price 1d. or 7s. per 100.*

PN-50892

# Historian's Office Library

The Church of Jesus Christ  
of Latter-day Saints

V00H-P

M230.9

S653r

1844



Liverpool : Printed by James and Woodburn,  
39, South Castle-Street.

## P R E F A C E .

---

Occasionally dropping into the Prophet's office, and taking a sly peep at matters and things ; and, in one of these moments of observation, I spied a letter from General B——, to Lieutenant - General Joseph Smith, and also the reply, both of which I thought a little too good to be lost among the rubbish, so I take the liberty to forward them to you for publication.

VIATOR.

Department of Manuscripts  
University of Cambridge

MS. A. 9. 2. 3. 9

The manuscript is written in the  
hand of the 15th century. It is  
a copy of the original text, and  
contains many corrections and  
additions. The text is written  
in a clear and legible hand, and  
is accompanied by many marginal  
notes. The manuscript is  
bound in a simple binding, and  
is in good condition. It is  
a valuable addition to the  
library, and is well worth  
preserving.

15th century

LETTER OF J. A. B——.

OF

A——N HOUSE, NEW YORK.

---

*A——n House, Oct. 24th, 1843.*

DEAR GENERAL,

I am happy to know that you have taken possession of your new establishment, and presume you will be eminently successful and happy in it, together with your good lady and family. You are no doubt already aware that I have had a most interesting visit from your most excellent and worthy friend, president B. Young, with whom I have had a glorious frolic in the clear

blue ocean ; for most assuredly a frolic it was, without a moment's reflection or consideration. Nothing of this kind would in the least attach me to your person or cause. I am capable of being a most *undeviating friend*, without being governed by the smallest religious influence.

As you have proved yourself to be a *philosophical divine*, you will excuse me when I say that we must leave their influence to the mass. The boldness of your plans and measures, together with their unparalleled success so far, are calculated to throw a charm over your whole being, and to point you out as the most extraordinary man of the present age. But my mind is of so mathematical and philosophical a cast, that the divinity of Moses makes no impression on me ; and you will not be offended when I say that I rate you higher as a legislator than I do Moses, because we have you present with us for examination ; whereas Moses derives his chief authority from prescription and the lapse of time. I cannot, however, say but you are both right, it being out of the power of man to prove you wrong. It is no mathematical problem, and

can, therefore, get no mathematical solution. I say, therefore, go a-head, you have my good wishes. You know Mahomet had his '*right hand man*.'

The celebrated Thomas Brown, of New York, is now engaged in cutting your head on a beautiful cornelian stone, as your *private seal*, which will be set in gold to your order, and sent to you. It will be a gem, and just what you want. His sister is a member of your church. The expense of this seal set in gold will be about forty dollars, and Mr. Brown assures me that if he were not so poor a man he would present it to you free. You can, however, accept it or not, as he can apply it to another use. I am myself short of cash, for although I had some time since two thousand dollars paid me by the Harpers, publishers, as the first installment on the purchase of my copyright, yet I had got so much behind during the hard times that it all went to clear up old scores. I expect thirty-eight thousand dollars more, however, in semi-annual payments from those gentlemen within the limits of ten years, a large portion of which

I intend to use in the State of Illinois, in the purchase and conduct of a large tract of land ; and, therefore, should I be compelled to announce, in this quarter, that I have no connexion with the Nauvoo Legion, you will, of course, remain silent, as I shall do it in such a way as will make all things right.

I may yet run for a high office in your State, when you would be sure of my best services in your behalf ; therefore, a known connexion with you would be against our mutual interest. It can be shown that a commission in the Legion was a *Herald* hoax, coined for the fun of it, by me, as it is not believed even now by the public. In short, I expect to be yet, through your influence, governor of the State of Illinois.

My respects to brother Young, Richards, Mrs. Emma, and all friends.

Yours, most respectfully,

J. A. B———.

*Lieut. Gen. Smith.*

P. S. As the office of inspector general confers no command on me, being a mere honorary



title, if, therefore, there is any gentleman in Nauvoo who would like to fill it in a practical way, I shall with great pleasure and good will resign it to him by receiving advice from you to that effect. It is an office that should be filled by some scientific officer.

J. A. B.

## JOSEPH SMITH'S REPLY.

---

*Nauvoo, Illinois, Nov. 13th, 1843.*

DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 24th ult. has been regularly received, its contents duly appreciated, and its whole tenor candidly considered ; and, according to my manner of judging all things in righteousness, I proceed to answer you, and shall leave you to meditate whether mathematical problems, founded upon the truth of revelation, or religion as promulgated by me, or Moses, can be solved by rules and principles existing in the systems of common knowledge.

How far you are capable of being 'a most un-deviating friend, without being governed by the smallest religious influence,' will best be de-

cided by your survivors, as all past experience most assuredly proves. Without controversy, that friendship, which intelligent beings would accept as sincere, must arise from love, and that love grow out of virtue, which is, as much a part of religion as light is a part of Jehovah. Hence the saying of Jesus ‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for a friend.’

You observe, ‘as I have proved myself to be a *philosophical divine*, I must excuse you when you say that we must leave these *influences* to the mass.’ The meaning of ‘*philosophical divine*’ may be taken in various ways. If, as the learned world apply the term, you infer that I have achieved a victory, and been strengthened by a scientific religion, as practised by the popular sects of the age, through the aid of colleges, seminaries, Bible societies, missionary boards, financial organizations, and gospel money-schemes, then you are wrong. Such a combination of men and means shows a form of godliness without the power ; for it is so written, ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise ; beware

lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments of the world and not after the doctrines of Christ.' But if the inference is, that by more love, more light, more virtue, and more truth from the Lord, I have succeeded as a man of God, then you reason truly, though the weight of the sentiment is lost, when the *influence is left to the mass*. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?

Of course you follow out the figure and say, 'the boldness of my plans and measures, together with their unparalleled success, so far are calculated to throw a charm over my whole being, and to point me out as the most extraordinary man of the present age.' *The boldness of my plans and measures* can readily be tested by the touchstone of all schemes, systems, projects and adventures—*truth*, for truth is a matter of fact; and the fact is, that by the power of God I translated the Book of Mormon from hieroglyphics; the knowledge of which was lost to the world. In which wonderful event I stood alone, an unlearned youth, to combat the worldly

wisdom and multiplied ignorance of eighteen centuries with a new revelation, which (if they would receive the everlasting gospel), would open the 'eyes' of more than eight hundred millions of people, and make 'plain the old paths,' wherein if a man walk in all the ordinances of God blameless, he shall inherit eternal life; and Jesus Christ, who was and is, and is to come, has borne me safely over every snare and plan laid in secret or openly, through priestly hypocrisy, sectarian prejudice, popular philosophy, executive power, or law-defying mobocracy, to destroy me.

If, then, the hand of God, in all these things that I have accomplished towards the salvation of a priest-ridden generation, in the short space of twelve years, through the boldness of the plan of preaching the gospel, and the boldness of the means of declaring repentance and baptism for the remission of sins; and a reception of the Holy Ghost, by laying on of the hands, agreeably to the authority of the priesthood; and the still more bold measures of receiving direct revelation from God, through the Comforter, as

promised, and by which means all holy men, from ancient times till now, have spoken and revealed the will of God to men, with the consequent 'success' of the gathering of the Saints, throws any 'charm' around my being, and points me out as the 'most extraordinary man of the age.' It demonstrates the fact, that truth is mighty and must prevail; and that one man empowered from Jehovah has more influence with the children of the kingdom than eight hundred millions led by the precepts of men. God exalts the humble, and debases the haughty. But let me assure you, in the name of Jesus, who spake as never man spake, that the 'boldness of the plans and measures,' as you term them, but which should be denominated the righteousness of the cause, the truth of the system, and power of God, which, 'so far,' has borne me and the church, (in which I glory in having the privilege of being a member), successfully through the storm of reproach, folly, ignorance, malice, persecution, falsehood, sacerdotal wrath, newspaper satire, pamphlet libels, and the combined influence, of the powers of

earth and hell. I say these powers of righteousness and truth, are not the decrees or rules of an ambitious or aspiring Nimrod, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Mahomet, Buona-  
 parte, or other great sounding heroes, that dazzled forth with a trail of pomp and circumstances for a little season, like a comet, and then disappeared, leaving a wide waste where such an existence once was, with only a name ; nor were the glorious results of what you term ‘boldness of plans and measures,’ with the attendant ‘success,’ matured by the self-aggrandizing wisdom of the priests of Baal ; the Scribes and Pharisees of the Jews ; Popes and Bishops of christendom, or Pagans of Juggernaut ; nor were they extended by the divisions or subdivisions of a Luther, a Calvin, a Wesley, or even a Campbell, supported by a galaxy of clergymen and churchmen, of whatever name or nature, bound apart by cast-iron creeds, and fastened to set stakes by chain-cable opinions, without revelation ; nor are they the lions of the land, or the leviathans of the sea, moving among the elements as distant chimeras to fatten the fancy



of the infidel, but they are as the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and will become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. Were I an Egyptian, I would exclaim, *Jah-oh-eh, Enish-go-on-dosh, Flo-ees-Flos-is-is* (O the earth! the power of attraction, and the moon passing between her and the sun.) A Hebrew, *Haueloheem yerau*. A Greek, *O theos phos esi*. A Roman, *Dominus regit me*. A German, *Gott gebe uns das licht*. A Portugee, *Senor Jesu Christo e libordade*. A Frenchman, *Dieu defend le droit*; but as I am I give God the glory, and say in the beautiful figure of the poet,—

‘ Could we with ink the ocean fill ;  
 Was the whole earth of parchment made :  
 And ev’ry single stick a quill,  
 And every man a scribe by trade,  
 To write the love of God above,  
 Would drain the ocean dry ;  
 Nor could the whole upon a scroll,  
 Be spread from sky to sky.’

It seems that your mind is of so ‘ mathematical and philosophical a cast, that the divinity of Moses makes no impression upon you, and



that I will not be offended when you say that you rate me higher as a legislator than you do Moses, because you have me present with you for examination ;' that ' Moses derives his chief authority from prescription and the lapse of time ; you cannot however say, but we are both right, it being out of the power of man to prove us wrong. It is no mathematical problem, and can therefore get no mathematical solution.'

Now, sir, to cut the matter short, and not dally with your learned ideas, for fashion's sake you have here given your opinion, without reserve, that revelation, the knowledge of God, prophetic vision, the truth of eternity cannot be solved as a mathematical problem. The first question then is, what is a mathematical problem ? and the natural answer is, a statement, proposition, or question that can be solved, ascertained, unfolded, or demonstrated, by knowledge, facts, or figures, for ' mathematical ' is an adjective derived from *mathesis* (Greek), meaning in English, learning or knowledge. ' Problem ' is derived from *probleme* (French), or

*problema*, (Latin, Italian, or Spanish), and in each language means a question or proposition, whether true or false. 'Solve' is derived from the Latin verb *solvo*, to explain or answer. One thing more in order to prove the work as we proceed : it is necessary to have witnesses, two or three of whose testimonies, according to the laws or rules of God and man, are sufficient to establish any one point.

Now for the question. How much are one and one ? Two. How much is one from two ? One. Very well, one question or problem is solved by figures. Now let me ask one for facts : was there ever such a place on earth as Egypt ? Geography says yes ; ancient history says yes ; and the Bible says yes. So three witnesses have solved that question. Again, lived there ever such a man as Moses in Egypt ? The same witnesses reply, *certainly*. And was he a prophet ? The same witnesses, or a part, have left on record, that Moses predicted in Leviticus that if Israel broke the covenant they had made, the Lord would scatter them among the nations, till the land enjoyed her Sabbaths ; and subsequent-

ly these witnesses have testified of their captivity in Babylon, and other places, in fulfilment. But to make assurance doubly sure, Moses prays that the ground might open and swallow up Korah and his company for transgression, and it was so; and he endorses the prophesy of Balaam, which said, out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city; and Jesus Christ, as he that 'had dominion' (about fifteen hundred years after) in accordance with this and the predictions of Moses, David, Isaiah and many others, came, saying—Moses wrote of me, declaring the dispersion of the Jews, and the utter destruction of the 'city;' and the apostles were his witnesses, unimpeached, especially Judé, who not only endorses the facts of Moses's 'divinity,' but also the events of Balaam and Korah, with many others, *as true*. Besides these tangible facts, so easily proved and demonstrated by simple rules and testimony unimpeached, the art (now lost) of embalming human bodies, and preserving them in the catacombs of Egypt, whereby men, women, and children as *mummies*,

after a lapse of nearly three thousand five hundred years, come forth among the living; and although *dead*, the papyrus which has lived in their bosoms, unharmed, speaks for them, in language like the sound of an earthquake. *Ecce veritas!* *Ecce cadaverous.* Behold the truth! Behold the mummies! Oh, my dear sir, the sunken Tyre and Sidon, the melancholy dust where 'the city' of Jerusalem once was, and the mourning of the Jews among the nations, together with such a 'cloud of witnesses,' if you had been as well acquainted with your God and Bible, as with your purse and pence table, the 'divinity' of Moses would have dispelled the fog of five thousand years, and filled you with light; for facts, like diamonds, not only cut glass, but they are the most precious jewels on earth. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.

The world at large is ever ready to credit the writings of Homer, Hesiod, Plutarch, Socrates, Pythagoras, Virgil, Josephus, Mahomet, and an hundred others, but where, tell me where, have they left a line, a simple method of solving the truth of the plan of eternal life? - Says the

Saviour, 'if any man will do his (the Father's) will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.' Here then is a method of solving the 'divinity' of men by the divinity within yourself, that as far exceeds the calculation of numbers, as the sun exceeds a candle. Would to God that all men understood it, and were willing to be governed by it, that when one had filled the measure of his days, he could exclaim, like Jesus,—'*veni, mori, et reviviscere.*'

Your good wishes to 'go a-head,' coupled with Mahomet and a 'right hand man,' are rather more vain than virtuous. Why, sir, Cæsar had his right hand Brutus, who was his 'left hand' assassin, not, however, applying the allusion to you.

As to the private seal you mention, if sent to me, I shall receive it with the gratitude of a servant of God, and pray that the donor may receive a reward in the resurrection of the just.

The summit of your future fame seems to be hid in the political policy of a 'mathematical problem' for the chief magistracy of this state,

which I suppose might be solved by ‘double position,’ where the *errors* of the *supposition* are used to produce a true answer.

But, sir, when I leave the dignity and honour I received from heaven, to boost a man into power, through the aid of my friends, where the evil and designing, after the object has been accomplished, can look up at the clemency intended as a reciprocation for such favours ; and where the wicked and unprincipled, as a matter of course, would seize the opportunity to flintify the hearts of the nation against me for dabbling at a sly game in politics ; verily, I say, when I leave the dignity and honour of heaven to gratify the ambition and vanity of man or men, may my power cease like the strength of Sampson, when he was shorn of his locks while asleep in the lap of Delilah, Truly said the Saviour, cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you.

Shall I who have witnessed the visions of eternity, and beheld the glories of the mansions of bliss, and the regions and the misery of the

damned ; shall I turn to be a Judas ? Shall I who have heard the voice of God, and communed with angels ; and spake as moved by the Holy Ghost for the renewal of the everlasting covenant, and for the gathering of Israel in the last days ; shall I worm myself into a political hypocrite ? Shall I who hold the keys of the last kingdom, in which is the dispensation of the fulness of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began, under the sealing power of the Melchisedec priesthood ; shall I stoop from the sublime authority of Almighty God to be handled as a monkey's cat's paw, and pettify myself into a clown to act the farce of political demagoguery ? No, verily no ! The whole earth shall bear me witness that I, like the towering rock in the midst of the ocean, which has withstood the mighty surges of the warring waves for centuries, *am impregnable*, and am a faithful friend to virtue, and a fearless foe to vice ; no odds, whether the former was sold as a pearl in Asia, or hid as a gem in America ; and the latter dazzles in palaces, or glimmers among the tombs.



I combat the errors of ages ; I meet the violence of mobs ; I cope with illegal proceedings from executive authority ; I cut the Gordian knot of powers ; and I solve mathematical problems of universities WITH TRUTH, *diamond truth*, and God is my ' *right hand man*.'

And to close, let me say, in the name of Jesus Christ, to you, and to presidents, emperors, kings, queens, governors, rulers, nobles, and men in authority every where, do the works of righteousness ; execute justice and judgment in the earth, that God may bless you and her inhabitants ; and

The laurel that grows on the top of the mountain,

Shall green for your fame while the sun sheds a ray ;

And the lily that blows by the side of the fountain,

Will bloom for your virtue till earth melts away.

With due consideration and respect, I have the honour to be your most obedient servant,

JOSEPH SMITH.

*General J. A. B——, A———n House, N. Y.*

P. S. The Court Martial will attend to your case in the Nauvoo Legion

J. S.